

OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

**JOHN T. SAVRNOCH**  
District Attorney



01-824

RELEASE NUMBER

January 8, 2026

RELEASE DATE

Kevin Weichbrod, Senior Deputy District Attorney

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**Oxnard Woman Sentenced to State Prison for Gross Vehicular Manslaughter**

**Re:    *People v. Ricki Newton,***  
***Santa Barbara Superior Court Case Number 24CR01715***

**SANTA BARBARA, Calif., January 8, 2026** - Santa Barbara County District Attorney John T. Savrnoch announced today that Ricki Newton, a 24-year-old resident of Oxnard, California, was sentenced to 2 years in State Prison. Ms. Newton previously pled guilty to one felony count of gross vehicular manslaughter in violation of Penal Code section 192(c)(1). During a lengthy sentencing hearing the District Attorney's Office requested Ms. Newton be sentenced to State Prison, while defense counsel advocated for felony probation. The 2-year State Prison commitment was imposed by Superior Court Judge Von Deroian in Department 11.

The charge stems from an incident that occurred on August 13, 2023, when Ms. Newton was driving southbound on US-101 at approximately 113mph, near Olive Mill Road exit. Ms. Newton was alleged to have been attempting to race a friend on the US-101. Ms. Newton attempted to pass a Mercury Mountaineer when she lost control, colliding with the vehicle and forcing it over an embankment. The passenger of the Mountaineer, Louis Hernandez Jr., a 77-year-old resident of Santa Paula, was ejected from the vehicle and died at the scene. At sentencing, family members spoke of Hernandez as a loving son, father, uncle, and dedicated hardworking man who made a better life for his family.

District Attorney John Savrnoch stated, "This is a reminder that a brief bad decision involving reckless driving can have tragic and life altering consequences. Thank you to the California Highway Patrol for their thorough investigation and the prosecution team led by Michelle Mossembekker for seeking justice on behalf of Mr. Hernandez in this case."

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